

Amendments

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (original) In a client-server architecture, a method for load balancing outgoing e-mail via e-mail source selection comprising:

providing a mail network comprising an initiator and at least two alternative gateways distinct from the initiator;

the initiator identifying a mail message recipient and identifying advertising material to be mailed to the recipient, automatically selecting a gateway from the at least two gateways, and requesting the selected gateway to automatically generate an e-mail message which includes the identified advertising material and to send the generated message to the recipient; and

the selected gateway generating and sending the requested message.

Claim 2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein each gateway comprises a set of multimedia files for inclusion in generated mail messages, the set on any one gateway including the same files as the sets on all the other gateways..

Claim 3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein the initiator comprises a list of the multimedia files included in the sets on the gateways, and a database of message recipients includes data on each recipient including the identified recipient, the data for the identified recipient being used in identifying the advertising material to be mailed to the identified recipient. .

Claim 4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the mail network is a WAN.

Claim 5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the gateways are coupled to the INTERNET such that the generated message is sent to the recipient via the INTERNET.

Claim 6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the selection of the gateway is at least partially based on attempting to minimize the time between when the gateway is requested to generate the message and when the recipient receives the message.

Claim 7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6 wherein each gateway can determine the round trip time between itself and the recipient's machine and the selection of a gateway is at least partially based on the determined RTTround trip time.

Claim 8. (original) In a client-server architecture, a method for load balancing outgoing e-mail via e-mail source selection comprising:

providing a mail network comprising an initiator and at least two alternative gateways

distinct from the initiator, each gateway comprising a set of multimedia files for inclusion in generated mail messages, the set on any one gateway including the same files as the sets on all the other gateways;

The initiator comprising a list of the multi-media files included in the sets on the gateways; comprising a database of message recipients which includes data on each recipient including the identified recipient; identifying a mail message recipient and using the data for the identified recipient in identifying advertising material to be mailed to the recipient;

selecting a gateway from the at least two gateways wherein the selection of the gateway is at least partially based on attempting to minimize the time between when the gateway is requested to generate the message and when the recipient receives the message, and

requesting the selected gateway to generate an e-mail message which includes the identified advertising material and to send the generated message to the recipient;

the selected gateway generating and sending the requested message.